

# ★ ★ ★ BIG SKY FLYER



Vol. XXX, No. 6 - November 2008

## The First F-15<sup>S</sup> Arrive

The dawn of the next MTANG generation

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RED HORSE sets up  
first disaster response  
bed down system.



A Freedom Salute was  
recently held to recognize  
recently deployed  
MTANG members.

EXCELLENCE ★ INTEGRITY ★ SERVICE





By Col. Michael J. McDonald  
120th Fighter Wing Commander

# World Class Work

How we get there is as important as where we end up

The Wing may not be doing what we have considered “normal daily business” at this point in time, but certainly no one can accuse us of not being busy. As you read this, we’ll be hosting an ANG Logistics Standardization and Evaluation Program Team that will evaluate the health of our processes involving the flying mission – all the way from ordering a needed part to the inspections at Last Chance just prior to takeoff. Literally, as we prepare for the LSEP outbrief, Finance will be receiving a Staff Assistance Visit from the ANG Finance Division. Down the road, we have an ACC Unit Compliance Inspection, Standardization and Evaluation Inspections from 1st Air Force, a Health Services Inspection, and an Environmental Safety Occupational Health Compliance Assessment Management Program Inspection. And of course, we’ll continue our conversion to the F-15 and continue to deploy ECS personnel – like the Security Forces going out in January.

“I’ve written many times in the past about taking the time for some introspection, to look at yourself and where you’re at and where you want to go. First and foremost, don’t forget why you joined the MTANG and don’t underestimate the incredible contribution you make as a member to our nation and our state.”

So what can we take away from all of this HHQ oversight, particularly since they’re not looking at what our Wing structure and resources are based on: Flying and Fighting? Pull out your FY 2008/9 Wing Goals and look at Number 2. “World Class Work – How we get there is as important as where we end up”. Compliance with standards is a highly desired AF trait for several reasons. First, it promotes seamless interoperability between Total Force units – a must in today’s AEF environment. Second, the standards have been evaluated against efficiency standards and facilitate mission accomplishment with the least cost. Finally, many standards have been learned the hard way and are in place to keep mishaps and accidents from being repeated.

It’s a different culture than years ago, and it may seem to be intrusive and unwarranted. Like it or not, it’s the reality of today and for our Wing to survive and go forward in a very competitive force structure it is essential that we take these challenges seriously and work hard to not just meet standards, but to exceed them. Our success in these upcoming compliance events will ensure that we’re on the right track when we get back into the “Fly and Fight” game.

Busy times like we’re in can cause us to lose perspective and get too focused on the trees instead of the forest. We’ve got our heads down pouring over the books, creating paper trails and keeping the ants under control and we forget to look up and around and see the elephants running by.

I’ve written many times in the past about taking the time for some introspection, to look at yourself and where you’re at and where you want to go. First and foremost, don’t forget why you joined the MTANG and don’t underestimate the incredible contribution you make as a member to our nation and our state. But more importantly, look up at the elephant – your life and what defines you as a person. The holiday season is right around the corner and is always a good time to sit back and take stock. Are there opportunities for you to take advantage of, or challenges you’d like to take on? Are there things you’d like to improve on, or things you’d like to totally turn around?

Our work and are lives are too important to muddle through and to accept “just because”. Let’s take positive charge of our destinies at the MTANG and at home so we can look back and say, “I’m proud to have been a part of that!”



The first of two F-15 Eagles flies over the MTANG runway. The two Eagles landed on August 15, 2008 as part of the 120th FW conversion from F-16s to F-15s. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jason Johnson)

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LEFT: One of the first two F-15 Eagles to arrive at the MTANG does a flyover before coming in for landing.

BELOW: Brig. Gen (sel.) Brad Livingston, Col. Pete Hronek, and Maj. Jason Green look on as they wait to greet the pilots. (U.S. Air Force Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jason Johnson)

# The Eagles have Landed

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**Excitement Greet's Arrival of New F-15 Mission**

One chapter is finished and another is yet to be written in the history of the Montana Air National Guard, as the 120th Fighter Wing begins its transition to a new aircraft.

In August, unit members said goodbye to the F-16 Fighting Falcon as the last aircraft made its way in flight across Montana's Big Sky Country. After flying the F-16 for 22 years, the 120th Fighter Wing will begin its transition to the F-15 Eagle.

"The F-15 mission really is one of the missions we did in the F-16," said Lt. Col. Michael Buck, the commander of the 186th Fighter Squadron. "The F-15's more capable in that arena, meaning that the equipment we have will allow us to do an even better job. Given our experience in working with the F-16, I expect that we'll do quite well, quite quickly in that airplane."

The unit's F-16s will find a new home with the Vermont Air National Guard, where they have been reassigned. But for many members of the 120th Fighter Wing, the F-16 was the only aircraft that they have known.

"The F-16 will be missed, because it was so friendly to the mechanic to work on it," said Master Sgt. Ted Gasvoda, who served as a crew chief on one of the unit's F-16s. "It's going to be challenging as far as they're an older aircraft and we're going to have to learn some new things. I think we'll transition just fine."

Earlier this year the F-16 aircraft and support personnel completed their second deployment to Balad Air Base, Iraq, as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The F-16 was a great platform for Montana, and it took us to our first ever combat deployments in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Those were all great pluses for the unit," said Lt. Col. Buck. "As we move into the F-15, we take that experience with us and the F-15 will give away to some even better, probably multi-role aircraft again. So the culture that we've developed, the understanding we have for all these different types of missions will no doubt become invaluable to us in the decades to come."

The 120th Fighter Wing will also transition from an air-to-ground mission to an air-to-air mission in gaining the F-15. The unit received four F-15s later in August, and will continue to receive two per month until its full compliment of aircraft has been delivered.

The Montana Air National Guard pilots are currently being sent to Air Force training centers in Florida and Oregon for about six

Staff Sgt. Christy Mason  
120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs







# Quick Reaction Force gets Non-Lethal Training

Joint QRF team prepares for state emergencies and civil disturbances

The Montana National Guard Quick Reaction Force held a two-day training session for its members to learn the use of non-lethal weapons at Fort Harrison, Montana, June 25-26.

The joint force is comprised of 30 Air and 30 Army National Guardsmen who have all volunteered for the additional-duty position. The mission of the QRF is to respond to initial terrorist events or the possibility of a multitude of natural disasters or civil disturbances.

QRF members cite many reasons for belonging to this organization. Master Sgt. Wayne Bonderenko, an airframe specialist, sees his participation in the QRF as broadening his professional horizons.

"It's fun, and it's something different. You're always learning something new and something you can use in the field," said Sergeant Bonderenko.

"I guess (I joined) to do something for my unit, but they didn't do it for me," said Tech. Sgt. Becca Carmichael, a struc-

tural maintenance craftsman. "I get to meet new people, and working with the Army is definitely interesting. It's not a chance you always get."

To ensure that they remain in top form, the QRF often participates in monthly joint-training exercises in order to learn new equipment and techniques.

"A lot of our training focuses on responses that would entail manning entry control points, keeping people out of a specific area that might need to be contained for some reason," said Lt. Col. Tim Lincoln, who serves as the officer in charge of the QRF. "If we have some type of civil disturbance, then we would need the capabilities and the training set, basically, to be able to respond to that."

The non-lethal weapon, riot gear familiarization and civil disturbance training that the QRF members received lasted for two days. The Guardsmen learned how to hold and subdue subjects, the correct operation of tasers, and on the last day they took a crash course in the use and effects of pepper spray.

The Guardsmen agreed that this exercise proved to be one of the toughest things that they had experienced during their training with the QRF.

"I don't ever want to do it again," said Bonderenko, recalling the feeling of being sprayed with pepper spray. He added the training will also prove to be valuable knowledge to put to use if needed during an emergency situation. "Before, I would have sprayed someone and never given it a second thought. Now I'd maybe give them a few more commands to tell them, Hey, I've done this, and you don't want it."

For the future, the Quick Reaction Force will continue to have joint, introductory and refresher training conducted alternately at locations at Fort Harrison and in Great Falls.

Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson  
120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



TOP: The Non-lethal Weapons Instructor pepper sprays Tech. Sgt. Becca Carmichael.

MIDDLE: SPC Thomas Pembroke of the Army National Guard realizes the effects of the pepper spray.

RIGHT: Water provides a welcome relief from the burning of the pepper spray for SPC Pembroke. (U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson)

LEFT: Maj. Rick Kostecki of the Montana Army National Guard restrains Senior Master Sgt. John O'Brien at the end of the pepper spray exercise.







# 120th Fighter Wing of the Montana Air National Guard

12 July 2008





# A Home in 24 Hours

## RED HORSE tests new emergency housing

Members of the 219th REDHORSE Squadron of the Montana Air National Guard recently set up a Disaster Relief Bed down Set system on a training site located at Malmstrom Air Force Base. This exercise marked the first time that the modular system of housing disaster response personnel would be constructed and tested.

The DRBS was created to address a need to house and provide services to personnel assisting the public during natural disasters or other major emergencies.

Local, state and federal emergency personnel responding to events such as forest fires, earthquakes or floods can be accommodated, even during extreme weather conditions.

The system is deployable to temperatures rated from 20 degrees below zero to 130 degrees. A 1500 person bare-base setup consists of 10 units that can house 150 personnel each and are strategically located across the nation.

“It’s going to provide a central location for all of the disaster workers to be able to centrally locate, provide everything they need, such as food and water,” said Tech. Sgt. Robert Carroll. “They provide all kinds of things to be able to help people that are involved in any disaster situation.”

The system includes 16 billeting tents with an electrical generation system, a latrine unit, a shower unit, and a laundry and dining facility. A water purification unit and water distribution center is also included in the system. This unique system does not need be deployed with personnel, as it was designed for any civil engineering personnel to be able to assemble it. The three-day exercise provided the members of the 219th REDHORSE Squadron valuable training and experience working with the DRBS system.

“It provided excellent training for not only the structures troops, but the services personnel who have never probably even seen a spec kitchen before”, said 2nd Lt. Mark Dehn. “It was very excellent in a training aspect and it was very excellent for the overall mission of the DRBS system to establish a timeline of how long it will actually take to set it up.”



LEFT: An aerial view of the Malmstrom A.F.B. training site shows the DRBS system near completion.

BELOW LEFT: 219th REDHORSE Airmen use sledge hammers and spikes to secure the base of the individual tents.

BELOW RIGHT: The tent structure begins to take shape. (U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson)

The DRBS system can be built to provide basic services for personnel within 24 hours and can be fully operational within 48 hours.

“It’s quick, it’s responsive, and we can put it up in two days. It’s easy to deploy and there’s not a lot of bulky items. It’s kind of a universal setup,” said Tech. Sgt. Fred Haffner. “The nice thing about it we can ship it anywhere stateside on a truck and we can also put it on planes.”

When not in use, the system will be packed and stored in individual storage units ready for an emergency and the call to be deployed anywhere in the nation.

“I believe that this is an asset that not only benefits the members of the 219th REDHORSE Squadron, but the entire state itself,” said Sergeant Haffner. “And it also provides the governor with an excellent resource to help out other states as well.”

Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson  
120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs







Technical Sgt. Charlie Heit, Nels Wick, Chaplain (Maj.) Mark Roberts, Holly Wick, and Technical Sgt. Dolly Mills made up the wedding party.



Charlene Meyer and Staff Sgt. Albert Jensen recite their vows via cell phones at the Malmstrom AFB Chapel.



Staff Sgt. Jensen takes part in his own proxy wedding while deployed to Southwest Asia.

# Married Half a World Away

## Double-proxy marriage joins distant couple

Many wedding ceremonies are performed at base chapels around the world, but an unusual one occurred in the chapel at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Great Falls, Montana.

Montana is the only state in the nation that allows a double-proxy marriage, which is when neither the participants are at the actual ceremony. At this ceremony there was a chaplain and a couple. But in this case, the couple was already married—yes, to each other. The bride and groom were communicating with each other on cell phones.

“It was all done on cell phone technology,” said Holly Wick, the 120th Fighter Wing family program coordinator. “I was holding one cell phone, and my husband was holding the cell phone where the groom was, and we said the vows back and forth that way.”

The bride was in Hawaii, the groom deployed to Southwest Asia. Holly assumed the power of attorney for Charlene Meyer, and Holly’s husband, Nels Wick, did the same for Staff Sgt. Albert Jensen of the Hawaii Air National Guard.

“It was fun. It was just different, and it was just neat to be able to bring not only something new here at Malmstrom, but also bring some fulfillment to Charlene and Albert’s lives,” said Malmstrom Air Force Base Chaplain (Maj.) Mark Roberts.

Chaplain Roberts recited the traditional vows for the two couples to repeat over the phones. “In sickness and in health, and forsaking all others keep only to her, so long as you both shall live?” asked Chaplain Roberts.

“I do,” said Sergeant Jensen from a cell phone set to speaker phone.

Holly found out about these unusual wedding plans while attending a National Guard conference, and the wing commanders from the Hawaii and Montana Air National Guard were aware of the situation.

“It’s my privilege to pronounce that you are husband and wife together. In the name of the father, and the son, and the Holy Spirit. Those who God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Amen. You’re married, congratulations!”

“We’re letting the phones kiss each other,” said Holly, for the benefit of the distant recently married couple.

“I just wish them the best, I hope they have a great marriage and I hope the separation ends pretty soon for them,” said Chaplain Roberts. “They can spend their lives together in wedded bliss.”

By Technical Sgt. Charlie Heit  
120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

# Freedom Salute to Those Deployed

A Freedom Salute ceremony was held at the Hampton Inn on August 10, 2008, recognizing the service of 35 members of the Montana Air National Guard, who recently deployed to support U.S. Air Forces Central during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Family members and employers of the deployed airmen and members of the family readiness group were also honored with special recognition during the ceremony, which included presentations by representatives of Senator Max Baucus’ and John Tester’s offices and members from the Montana Military Appreciation Project.

The Freedom Salute program was originally designed by the Army National Guard to honor Soldiers and their supporters for their sacrifices made during the ongoing Global War on Terror. The program has become one of the largest recognition events in the history of the Army National Guard, with over 100,000 Soldiers, family members, employers and other supporters being recognized.

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Randy Mosley, the former Adjutant General of Montana, has since included members of the Montana Air National Guard in Freedom Salute ceremonies to honor the returning Airmen, families and their supporters.

The 120th Fighter Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant Larry Seibel considers the Freedom Salute Ceremony an opportunity for MTANG leadership to thank the Airmen for the outstanding sacrifices they have made during their deployments.

“It’s a tribute to the men and women who have deployed and sacrificed so much,” said Chief Seibel. “This is a little way of saying thank you to them.”

During the ceremony the Airmen received a United States flag that was flown over the state capital in Helena, a hand-made minuteman statue, and a Montana challenge coin honoring their service to their nation.

The commander of the Montana Air National Guard, Brig.

Gen. John Del Toro, described the combat mission of the 120th Fighter Wing and how the Airmen fit into the big picture of the war effort.

“We exist in the F-16 to support the Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and the Airmen on the ground. We see our next platform (F-15), giving us the ability to again allow the Soldiers and ground troops to isolate the threat,” said General Del Toro. “They will at least know that as long as we’re up there, they stand a better chance of knowing what they need to defend and what they can really write off as being taken care of because of what you



BG John Walsh recognizes Senior Master Sgt. Ben Mart in a reception line for his recent deployment, and his family for their many sacrifices made during their time apart. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson)

accomplished, either directly with firepower or indirectly with the support mechanism that gets it there. That’s just been a tribute to everything you’ve done to accomplish the mission.”

Members of the American Legion joined other community organizations in showing their appreciation for the Airmen’s service.

“As an American Legion Post, we want to support them 100 percent, because we believe in what they are doing,” said William Patrick O’Donnell, the adjutant of American Legion Post 341 in Great Falls. “God bless America and God bless our troops over there and I hope they come home safe.”

Senior Master Sgt. Eric J. Peterson  
120th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



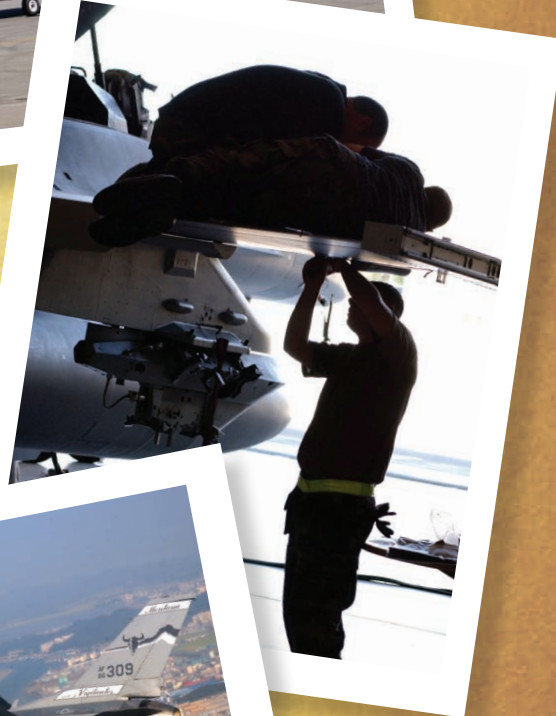
# HISTORY Of THE MTANG

The Montana Air National Guard turned 60 on June 27, 2007. There are so many stories to tell, it is difficult to abbreviate our history without minimizing our many achievements. Instead of a detailed list of events, here is the fourth and final in a series of the top historical eras that span the years.

## THE F-16 FIGHTING FALCON: 1986-2008

Our unit received F-16As in 1986. When the unit converted to F-16Cs in 2001, we also gained a multi-role fighter/bomber mission, and deployed those F-16s from March AFB to Curacao to Southwest Asia. We are now saying goodbye to them as we welcome in the F-15s.

By Master Sgt. Al Garver  
Joint Force Historian



# The News You Can Use

## Gen. McKinley approved to lead Guard Bureau

Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley was confirmed as the 26th chief of the National Guard Bureau by the Senate Oct. 2 in Washington, D.C.

He will also become the first four-star general in the nearly 372-year history of the National Guard.

The current director of the Air National Guard, General McKinley was nominated by the president in September based on the recommendation of Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

He succeeds Army Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, who was also confirmed Oct. 2 by the Senate to become the first National Guard deputy commander for the U.S. Northern Command. General Blum has served as chief of the Guard Bureau since 2003.

As chief of the National Guard Bureau, General McKinley will be the senior uniformed officer representing nearly 468,000 citizen Soldiers and Airmen.

He will also serve as the principal adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on National Guard issues.

by Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith  
National Guard Bureau



Technical Sgt. Jason Johnson receives the NCO of the Year award from Lt. Gen. McKinley. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Master Sgt. Rose Bennett)

## Tricare Reserve and Guard family benefit now permanent

Eligible families of activated National Guard and Reserve members will continue to save up to \$300 in annual deductibles now that a Tricare "demonstration" program is a permanent benefit.

Eligible family members of Guard and Reserve personnel activated for more than 30 days under federal orders in support of a contingency operation are made eligible for Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra, which have annual deductibles. While they may be eligible to enroll in Tricare Prime or Tricare Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members, which have no deductibles, many may choose to stay with Tricare Standard or Extra.

## More documentation necessary to replace, renew ID cards

Homeland Security Directive 12 now requires retirees and family members seeking to renew or replace a military identification card to provide two types of ID.

Retirees and family members needing identification cards must have two of the following types of current identification, one of which must include a photo:

- Driver's license or ID issued by a state or outlying U.S. commonwealth or possession
- ID card issued by federal, state or local government agencies or entities
- School ID card with a photograph
- Voter's registration card
- U.S. military ID card
- U.S. passport
- Certificate of U.S. citizenship
- Certificate of naturalization

The listing above is not all inclusive. A list of acceptable documents can be found at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf>, Page 4.



# Faces of the Guard

## Outstanding Airmen of the Year

PRESORTED  
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GREAT FALLS, MT



Senior Airman Kenneth R. Davis, Jr.



Tech. Sgt. Branson J. Bentley



Master Sgt. Christopher S. Wilson



Master Sgt. Teresa A. Pilgeram



1st Lt. David K. Torgerson

The 120th Fighter Wing has announced the winners of the Outstanding Airmen of the Year Program. Senior Airman Kenneth R. Davis, Jr., 120th Communications Flight, is the Airman of the Year; Tech. Sgt. Branson J. Bentley, 120th Communications Flight, is the NCO of the Year; Master Sgt. Christopher S. Wilson, 120th Communications Flight, is the Senior NCO of the Year; Master Sgt. Teresa A. Pilgeram, 120th Medical Group, is the First Sergeant of the Year; and 1st Lt. David K. Torgerson, 120th Operations Support Flight, was named the Junior Officer of the Year for the 120th Fighter Wing. These individuals will now go on to compete for the Montana Air National Guard Airman of the Year Program. Please congratulate these outstanding Airmen when you see them.



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